754 [755] designed to neutralize the effects of the korti. It was a kana that father Niany used against the snake bites (2).

2. See above, pp. 157-159.

A third category of magic weapons is that of the siri-kun' or "knots." Though not itself a genie, the siri-kun' is at least dependent on a genie, and it is by addressing a vow or an oath to the genie that one succeeds in obtaining revenge or avoiding the vengeance of another.

As its name would suggest, the siri-kun' is something that binds, that is, something that forces or paralyzes. It receives the obligations undertaken and sworn to by individuals in its presence and it will punish perjury. It renders helpless and paralyzes anyone against whom its intervention has been asked.

I have myself seen Bambara clutching a few bits of straw when they came to me to settle some lawsuit or other. They were following instructions and trying to make me submit to the siri-kun', that is, to paralyze my capacity to take action against them (3).

3. The chronicle of Ségou tells of a similar action by Ngolo against Mamari (see p. 53).

All these dealings in criminal magic are performed in an atmosphere of the most disconcerting trickery and hypocrisy; often the most fawning neighbors are the most to be feared. That is why a Bambara [152] likes to have the assurance of a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme). He seeks him and often thinks that he has found him in the brotherhood of one of those all-powerful genii of which we shall have occasion to speak.

788 Rites. There is no magic without appropriate rites, which must be strictly observed. Any negligence makes the operation useless, even dangerous, for the performer. We saw how the initiator who went to sleep while awaiting the return of the spirit he had invoked was promptly killed by the spirit

788 as it returned to its point of departure. This was presumably because the operator had not done what was necessary to assure the reintegration of the supernatural power.

[778] There are thus rites that set in motion this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified -- rites that channel, direct and orientate this energy so that not only it will reach the goal sought, but also it will be kept from straying from the desired route, thus harming the very person it is supposed to aid. Similar means are used to forestall the misdeeds which may be committed by an agent mistakenly invoked. When Ngolo had aroused his son Ntyi's ambition, he thought he could conjure away its effects by sacrificing his two grandsons, Ntyi's own children.

Those actions that call upon, guide and reintegrate this universal energy, whether diffuse or personified, are what we call rites.

788 754 During the oath using kola, the operator has in his hand a sharp object (pin, thorn, etc.) with which he pricks or stabs through the nut, saying, for instance: "Take my heart and my liver and kill me, if...." (i ka ne son' ni m bien' ta, ni ...). These pricks indicate to the "power" with which the operator is concerned that, if necessary, it should take vengeance by piercing the guilty person, just as the kola is pierced by the pin (1).

1. The shirt sent by Ma-n-son to Forokoro was first pricked with a needle (p. 120).

In curses, all the imprecations used are so many indications, indeed sometimes instructions (2), as to how the [153] spirit invoked is requested to act.

[575] 2. At the time of admission to the brotherhoods, the most frightful threats are made against the traitor or perjuror in the form of curses indicating to the avenging spirit how he should punish: "may it enter through your anus and come out through your mouth, etc."

778 emanating from the person or object impregnated with magic
789 force acts as if it were a part of that person or object. Often
the magician or [154] ritual officiant spits on the person or
● [788] object involved in the rites. This is a means of transferring
one person's fluid to another.

Conversely, it is vital to know how to avoid contact
751 with, or even emanations from, a maleficent magic force.
787 That is the reason for the great number of mysterious magic
754 practices and the secret of the innumerable amulets that form so many shields, to be placed presumably where they will best protect against any blow. Therefore it is the magician's prerogative to make amulets and to prescribe the conduct necessary to preserve their efficacy.

It should be noted that protection set up against a given person is good only for him and is useless against a successor, for instance. The chronicle tells us that Bani, chief of Samba-Nyana, was successful in using certain artifices to prevent Ma-n-son from conquering him. But, kept in ignorance of Ma-n-son's death and having taken no precautions against Da, Ma-n-son's son and successor, Bani was conquered by Da, against whom his artifices availed nothing.

If one is caught in spite of precautions, what is to be done? Everyone is afflicted in one way or another in any event. A Bambara is always inclined to believe in some sort of supernatural intervention. He has on hand some sort of remedy, but more often he resorts to a "seer" for guidance or, if the case requires, to a magician's skill.

Native medicine is a mass of magic formulas and of remedies strikingly reminiscent of the pharmacopeia of the Middle Ages (see, in the foregoing, father Niany's operations).

[571] The individual does not live as an isolated unit but
789 rather as an integral part of a community. In the society in
783 which he lives, however restricted it may be, he progressively occupies various situations. On both physical and moral levels, he undergoes changes and, depending on circumstances, whether fortunate or unfortunate happenings, changes take place within him. In short, his magic potential varies. These variations are always believed to concern the entire milieu, upon which they may (in the case of illness or death) have disastrous effects.

789 The individual is therefore required to [155] undergo proper
783 treatment to return him to his normal, harmless state.

789 From this point of view, social life seems to give rise
788 to a series of rites involving the disintegration and reintegra-
182 tion or the aggregation of the individual in relation to the group in which he lives. Birth, circumcision, marriage, illness, death and the performance of certain trades are all modes of existence, whose beginning and end usually involve three stages: separation from the common milieu, accomplishment of the act, and reintegration into the former milieu or aggregation in a new milieu. Between the first and the second state as well as between the third and the fourth there exists usually a kind of negative interval which we call marginal. This system, which comes to light upon an analysis of multiple facts, is actually subject to modifications or alterations which can change its physiognomy. Nevertheless, the basis of these ritual sequences is so well established that by comparing external manifestations with the theoretical system it is possible to understand them better and to restore to some of them, which have become badly mutilated, their real meaning, which the native is usually, if not always, unable to explain or to define precisely.

A detailed study of institutions will give an opportunity for concrete analysis of these ritual sequences, which a kind of age-old empiricism has transformed into laws of a sort. They have come to represent that part of custom which has acquired a kind of permanence by virtue of public acceptance.

It is apparent everywhere among the Blacks that events of a general character (birth, coming-of-age, marriage, illness and death) are surrounded by ritual practices that vary outwardly from place to place but may all fit our theoretical system of three stages with marginal periods. All denote a common basis of magic and all derive from a long-tried empiricism which has given them a peculiar and relatively stable physiognomy in terms of the milieu with which the rites are connected.

571 What we have just said about individuals must also ap-
182 ply to collective groups: the latter deal with each other or

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields
775 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

796 Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by the members of the Kworé society. The rites for renewing the year involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have been described by G. Dieterlen in the Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo ... Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the nyama tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

534 787 asks: modè (grandson) for unimportant subjects, hunting, voyages; fadè (son of the father) for individual life, physical and moral; fa (father) for the future, destiny, the public life of a man, his authority, his rule; fakoroke (father's older brother) for the plantings, the rains, for fortune; fa dogone (father's younger brother) for germination of the cereals; ba (mother) for everything concerning the women; [107] faso (father's house) for everything concerning the familial abode or the absent.

534 The principal efficacy of the harp is in bringing order, by the rhythms and sounds emanating from it, to all that is troubled in the march of events.

The harp presides at sacrifices, at cathartic or medical rites, at purifications, at apotropaic rites, at solitary meditations. Its high notes are celestial and symbolic of completeness; the low notes connote terrestrial things and incompleteness. Its playing commands arrivals and departures, proliferations and diminutions, calls to order; its presence at the edge of a pool, where it had been silently placed, is assurance of appeasement.

The harpist, before beginning his service, puts his mouth to [788] the orifice in the frame and murmurs to the master of the Word: "Now it is your turn, organize the world." (1)

1. Passim, Griaule, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the Africain Arts].

533 534 Music, dance, and song are intimately linked in the religious movement. Thus it is that a djo of the Samakè (Bougouni circle) is composed entirely of musicians who form an orchestra in which the whole scale is represented by eight different principal instruments, which are types of a multitude of others. There is one n'ganian-ba, an instrument made by hollowing out a trough in a tree trunk, which gives a very deep sound when rubbed; it is the bass which gives the cadence. Two to three tioro give a sharper sound; four to six tioun, a still sharper sound, and there are as many as ten fere, the instrument with the sharpest sound. Finally, a host of N'ganian dyeli begin the 533 292 music as the griot quiets the crowd at the start. All these instruments have the form of a pirogue. In addition, the orchestra includes two singers and two dancers. Everyone wears masks, bonnets with crests

776

1. To understand this belief of the Negro, read the chapter on sickness and death.

The most famous and terrible of all these invisible little beings of the bush, who are without official minister or priest but to whom many offerings nevertheless are made, is the wokolo. It is black as soot, with a skin like a monkey's, and no larger than an infant of one or two months. It likes to appear, and one can say that no Negro reaches thirty without having seen it. Although sometimes during the most severe heat or in the evening by the light of the moon, it runs along the banks of the river, throwing into the stream its tiny line, almost invisible and finer than a hair, it prefers the bush and the butter tree; the karité (Bassia parkii) is its prime favorite. With quiver slung over its shoulder and bow always strung, it lies in wait, and woe betide anyone who comes by and disturbs it. To defeat it and force it to beat a retreat, the one who comes upon it must greet it as soon as he sees it, but usually it is invisible and shoots him with its arrow, an arrow so small that he does not even feel it penetrate the flesh. It is this [753] arrow that causes the deep pussy abscesses (2) from which our Negroes

2. Like all superstitious and weak-minded people, the Negro believes that he has actually seen what are but imaginary dreams and wishes.

suffer.

Many of these invisible beings have no name. The least sociable are those that live in the false cedars, for to subdue them /87/ one must be a noumou (blacksmith), a koulé (digger of canoes, mender of gourds), etc. Only such persons dare to deal the first stroke of the ax to these trees and cut them down (1).

[788]

1. Before doing so they recite a formula, and the first stroke of the ax is dealt by the chief of the blacksmiths, etc., or his deputy.